

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

HON. GEORGE H. STEARNS,
M A Y O R ,

TO THE

CITY COUNCILS OF MANCHESTER,

DELIVERED

BEFORE THE TWO BRANCHES IN CONVENTION, JAN. 6, 1885.

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCILS.



MANCHESTER, N. H.:
PRINTED BY JOHN B. CLARKE.
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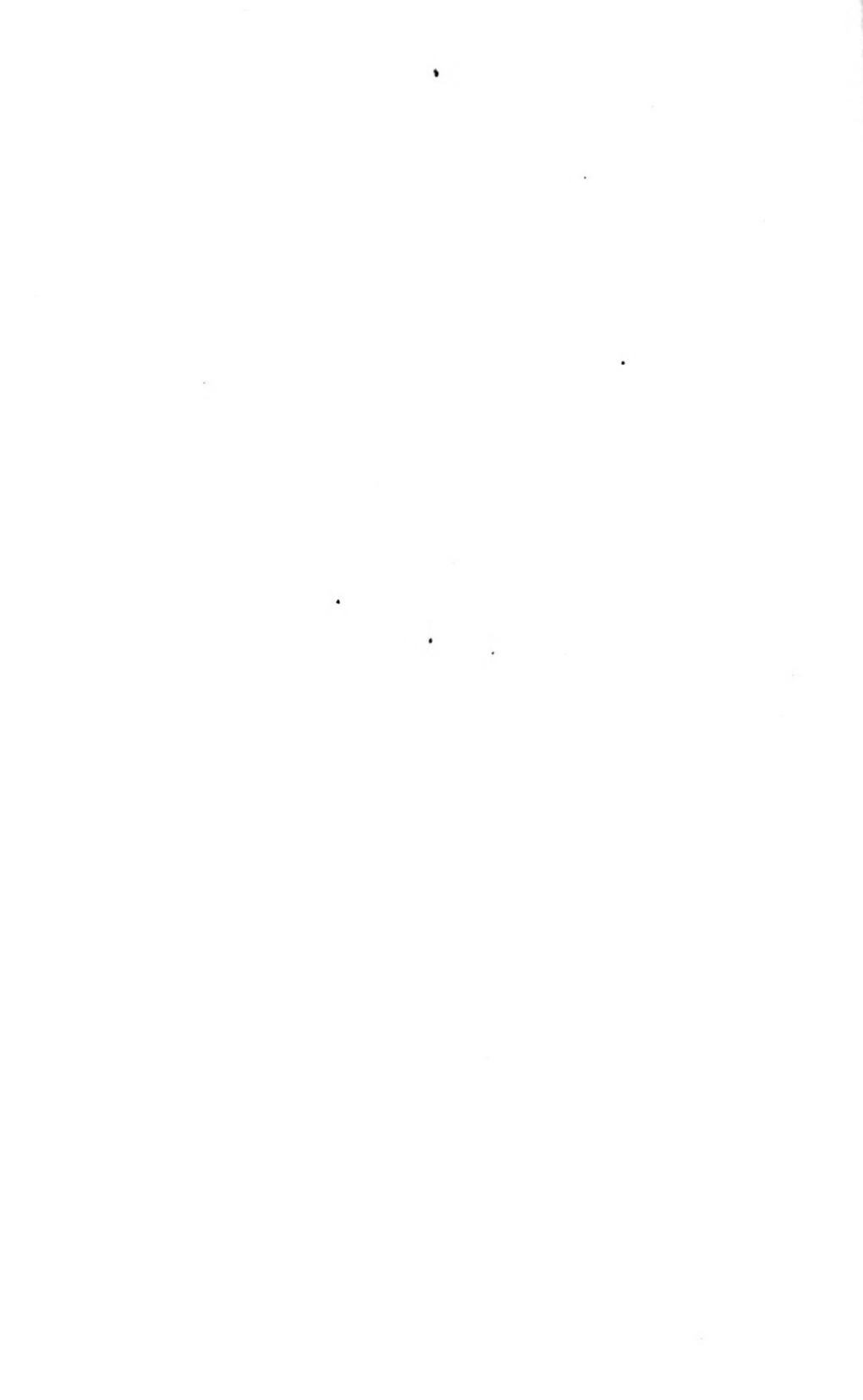
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INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the City Councils:—

In entering upon the discharge of the duties of the position in which I have been placed by my fellow-citizens,—a place which has often been filled by men of the highest ability in the administration of public affairs, some of whom have received the highest honors from the people of the state,—as I contemplate the difficulties and trials inseparably connected with the work which has been assigned me, I am profoundly impressed with the weight of the responsibilities which I have assumed, and am tempted to fear that I may fail to justify the confidence reposed in me, and act my part in a manner which at all times shall result in the highest good of the people of the city. In the midst of these doubts and misgivings, I am, however, sustained by the conviction that whatever may be my errors of judgment, I shall not be found wanting in watchfulness and sincere devotion to the public welfare. I am, moreover, cheered by the assurance that I am to be associated, in the various departments of the city government, with gentlemen upon whom I can confidently rely for counsel and encouragement at all times and under all circumstances.

We are assembled to inaugurate the fortieth municipal government of the city, a charter having been granted by

the legislature of 1846. Twenty-one of the citizens have held the office of mayor, and all but five, including the first two, are still living. During all these years the people have been represented in the various departments of the government by some of the wisest and most trusted citizens, and the generations of to-day are enjoying the fruits of their well directed labors in inaugurating and completing the great public enterprises which contribute so much to the convenience, the comfort, and pleasure of all. In looking back to the work of our predecessors in the management of public affairs, it is gratifying to find so much to approve and so little to condemn. As we follow in their footsteps in carrying on the work which called forth their best faculties and energies, let us hope that, while we endeavor to avoid their errors, we may profit by their wisdom and experience.

We commence our labors as the servants of the people at a time of depression in the great business affairs of the country, and for this reason, among others, it behooves us to move with caution and prudence in the appropriation and disbursement of the public funds, and to bear in mind the embarrassing circumstances by which many of the tax-payers of the city may be surrounded. While the business of our city has been curtailed to some degree during the present crisis, it is a subject for congratulation that our great manufacturing industries, upon which the welfare of the city largely depends, have been so managed that the people have suffered but little as compared with those of many other cities and towns in various sections of the country.

Gentlemen, I now invite your attention to a brief sur-

vey of the condition of the public affairs of the city at the present time, and also to a few suggestions in relation to some of the most important matters which will come before us for consideration.

FINANCE.

I find by the books of the city treasurer that the condition of the finances the first day of January, 1885, was as follows:—

Total amount of funded debt	\$845,200.00
Interest due, estimated	20,000.00
Temporary loan	119,000.00
Due Amoskeag Company for land	25,776.40
Outstanding bills	54,163.00
Total indebtedness Jan. 1, 1885	———— \$1,064,139.40
Cash in treasury Jan. 1, 1885	63,719.30
Net indebtedness Jan. 1, 1885	———— \$1,000,420.10

It will be observed by the foregoing statement that the unpaid bills, notes, and interest amount to nearly \$219,000, and that the cash on hand to meet these bills amounts to less than \$64,000, which leaves a balance of more than \$155,000 to be provided for. I would recommend the funding of this floating debt, for which bonds can be issued.

It will be necessary to make provision for a temporary loan for the purpose of raising money to pay the ordinary expenses until the first of July next, when the taxes which will be assessed in April will become due. It is highly important that the expenses of the government

should not be allowed to overrun the appropriations, and thus add to the debt of the city.

It appears by the books of the city collector that the total amount of unpaid taxes on the tax list of 1884 is \$15,146, which is within about four per cent of the total amount assessed.

WATER-WORKS.

The water-works of the city, which have been built and in operation for a period of ten years, have more than realized the highest hopes and expectations of the citizens who projected that most important enterprise. The works, which from the first have been placed entirely in charge of some of the most trusted of our citizens, have been so well managed that the income has been more than sufficient to pay the interest of the water bonds and the expense of putting in twenty-three and a half miles of additional distributing pipes. The original cost of the works was \$600,000, and the cost of the extension of the pipes during the past ten years has amounted to the sum of \$223,000. The total length of distributing pipes laid down up to the present time is forty-three and a half miles, and the total number of hydrants is 369.

There is reason to fear that the purity of the water at the source of supply may, in time, be much impaired by filth which is liable to be discharged into the lake from outhouses connected with the cottages located upon its shores. It is hoped that some steps may be taken to prevent any serious consequences to our citizens on this account.

STREETS.

One of the most important subjects in which all our people, and especially the tax-payers, are deeply interested, is that of keeping the public thoroughfares at all times in a perfectly safe condition. To effect this object the superintendents of streets and surveyors of highways should be men of sound judgment and experience. It therefore becomes a very important duty on the part of the city councils to select the very best men for these responsible positions. In these times, when the city is often called upon to pay heavy damages for injuries alleged to have been received by people in passing through the public avenues, the city authorities ought at all times to be able to demonstrate that if such accidents are received at all, it is on account of no carelessness or neglect on the part of the officers having them in charge.

A steam road-roller is greatly needed, as it is impossible to construct a good macadamized street without the aid of one.

LIGHTING STREETS.

The cost of lighting our streets during the last year was about \$11,000, against \$5,500 three years ago. A very large portion of this increased expense is owing to the introduction of the electric lights, which cost the sum of \$4,092 per year. I would suggest that it may be for the interests of the city to employ the Gas Company to take the entire charge of the lighting and repairing of all the street lamps.

BRIDGES.

All the bridges are in good condition except Amoskeag and Granite bridges, which will require new planking

the present year. The replanking of the bridges across the Merrimack river once in two years, which has become necessary in consequence of the extensive travel over those thoroughfares, has been a heavy item of expense to the city. Last year the new McGregor bridge was covered by concrete, with the view of protecting the planks from speedy destruction by the passage of vehicles over them. If the experiment proves successful, a great saving will be effected.

The expense of this department the past year was about \$10,000.

SEWERS AND DRAINS.

A large appropriation will be necessary for the construction of our sewers and drains. I would suggest that an appropriation be made, sufficient for the building of a sewer to drain the north end of the city, as recommended by the committee on sewers and drains of the last city government. It is proposed that this sewer shall commence at the junction of Webster and Union streets, and extend through Webster street to the River road, and down that thoroughfare to Bridge street, where a connection will be made with the Bridge-street sewer, which enters the river under McGregor bridge. The north section of the city is rapidly increasing in population, and a sewer in that quarter is imperatively necessary. It is also necessary to extend the Bridge-street sewer east from Elm to Nashua street, for the purpose of relieving the Nashua-street sewer. An appropriation of \$20,000 will probably be needed for this department.

THE FIRE DEPARTMENT.

The fire department continues to maintain its well earned reputation of being among the very best in the country, both in equipment and the character and efficiency of its members. The board of engineers, the officers of companies, and the firemen have worked in the most perfect harmony, and in a manner to secure the confidence and esteem of the people of the city. The steam fire-engines and other apparatus are in excellent condition, and there seems to be but little room for improvement in this department.

I am informed by the chief engineer that the boxes connected with the fire-alarm-telegraph system have become worn out, after being in use for ten years, and need reconstruction. New wires must also be procured to replace those now in use, for the same reason. I would recommend, when this is done, that private fire-alarm signals be introduced into the large school buildings, so that in case of fire in any one of them the department may be called out without delay. The expediency of securing a further protection of these buildings, as well as the lives of the pupils, in the manner proposed, would seem to be obvious, when it is remembered that there is no insurance upon the school property of the city.

The appropriation in this department for 1884 was \$20,000. I invite your attention to the excellent report of the chief engineer.

CLAIMS UPON THE CITY.

I learn, by the report of the city solicitor, that there are now pending fourteen claims for damages against the

city, for injuries sustained on the streets and sidewalks, amounting in the aggregate to the sum of \$50,000. The most of these have been referred to the coming March term of the supreme court.

PUBLIC PARK.

I will now invite you to consider the question as to whether the interests of the people will be best promoted by taking immediate steps to provide a public park. If a park is ever to be provided at all, it is clear that the longer any action looking to the attainment of that result the more difficult and expensive it will be. The lands owned by the Amoskeag Company, lying in the vicinity of Rock Rinnon, and including that spot, are in all respects adapted for all the purposes of a public park. It has been thought that satisfactory arrangements for the purchase of these lands may be made with the Amoskeag Company, which from the first has exhibited a spirit of great liberality in giving its aid and support to all measures which tend to promote the health and happiness of the people of the city.

COMMONS.

The commons, which are one of the leading attractions of our city, have been well cared for during the past few years. Many important improvements have been made and considerable amount of money has been expended, so that no great outlay will be required for some time to come.

CEMETERIES.

The cemeteries have been much improved during the past year and are now in excellent condition. Dur-

ing the past year the Pine Grove Cemetery has been enlarged by the addition of about twenty acres of land at a cost of \$3,090. The cost of the improvements at this cemetery has amounted to \$9,251. The board of trustees of the cemeteries recommend the building of a new receiving-tomb, the old tomb being too small to meet the wants of the public.

CITY LIBRARY.

This institution, under the judicious management of the board of trustees and the librarian, continues to realize the wishes and hopes of its founders in promoting the improvement and enjoyment of the people. The library has, from time to time, received liberal donations of books from citizens who have been identified with the growth and prosperity of our city. It would be a great advantage to many of our people if a public reading-room were established in connection with the library. The library now consists of 27,876 volumes.

THE SCHOOLS.

The people of our city, throughout its entire history, have spared no pains or expense in seeking to provide the best advantages for the education of their children. At the present time our school buildings, in beauty and convenience, are unsurpassed by any which can be found in any of the cities of the country of equal size; and there are the best reasons for claiming that our teachers, in character and ability, are at least equal to those who are employed in those cities and towns which are the most fortunate in this respect. With all our advances in the management of our schools, it is claimed by many who

are regarded as authorities in this matter that there is still room for much improvement.

In view of the fact that only a small number of the pupils in the schools desire a more complete education in the colleges or higher seminaries, with the design of entering the learned professions, it becomes a matter of great importance that the larger class should occupy the first place in the care and regard of the teachers and others upon whom are placed all the responsibilities pertaining to this subject.

Total number of pupils in the schools during the past year was	3,918
Average number	2,872
Total expense of schools	\$53,477
Cost per scholar	18.62

POLICE DEPARTMENT.

The protection of the people and the preservation of the peace and order of the city are among the most difficult duties the municipal authorities are called upon to perform.

The affairs of this department appear to have been very creditably managed for the past year or two, and the city has not been afflicted on account of the commission of any of the great capital crimes on the part of any person residing in our jurisdiction.

Inasmuch as the best men as to character and fitness are required to perform the duty of keeping the peace in a successful manner, it becomes a matter of much consequence that none should be appointed but such as are temperate and free from all vices of whatever name

or character. While they should be men of firmness and courage, they should be vigilant and discreet. They should also be able to control their temper under provocation, and to treat suspected prisoners who are under arrest with civility and kindness. It is hoped that those having the appointment of these officers will exercise great care and discrimination in the discharge of that duty.

Among the most common of the less flagrant offenses, drunkenness continues to take the lead. It cannot be denied that the sin of intemperance is the source of a vast amount of suffering, not only to the victims themselves but to their families and friends and the community at large. How to overthrow or mitigate the evil is a question of very serious importance. From the experiences of the past, it appears useless to hope for a thorough and lasting reform in this direction until a strong and ardent moral sentiment is awakened among the people of all classes, and more especially among the educated, the refined, the wealthy, and the influential. How can we expect to reform the lower classes, so called, so long as the habit of drinking intoxicating liquors prevails to a very large extent among those in the higher walks of life who give tone and character to society, and even among those who assist in framing and administering the laws? I shall at all times most heartily coöperate with you in the support of all measures that may seem to be the most judicious and practicable for the preservation of the peace and order of the city; and best calculated to promote a reform of the evil of intemperance.

A new police station has been erected on the corner of Manchester and Chestnut streets and will be ready for occupancy in the course of a few weeks. The building is located in a comparatively retired spot, and altogether superior to the old station in the City-Hall building. It contains all the accommodations needed for the police department and the police court. In regard to the exact cost of the building I am not informed, as the bills are mostly charged to incidental expenses. I would respectfully suggest that hereafter, when a new building is to be erected or any other enterprise is undertaken, a special appropriation be made for this purpose and a separate account opened, so that the citizens have an opportunity to know at once the exact amount of money expended.

The total amount expended in the police department the past year was about \$26,000.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT.

I wish to refer to the urgent demand that more stringent measures should be taken for the better preservation of the health of our citizens. It has long been felt that it is not enough to pass ordinances requiring the people to keep their premises free from all nuisances and offensive substances calculated to generate disease, unless the laws upon this subject are strictly enforced. In spite of all that has been done in the way of calling the attention of the people to the ordinance upon the subject, the air in many of the back streets in the very heart of the city during the summer months has often been polluted by decaying vegetable and animal substances and filth lying in uncleansed outhouses. As a consequence, there has been

a very much larger rate of mortality among children from cholera infantum in such localities than in those sections where the laws of health in this respect have been observed. In view of the probability that the country may be scourged by Asiatic cholera during the present year, it becomes our duty to act promptly in this matter. I would suggest that a police officer or some other reliable person be appointed to make daily inspection in back streets and by-ways, and vigorously prosecute all offenders against the law.

In this connection I desire to call your attention to the question as to whether the public good requires that a public hospital should be established here without further delay. The people of other cities in the country, some of which have much less pretension upon the score of wealth and population, have long enjoyed the benefits of institutions of this character. It must be apparent to all that a large proportion of our adult population consists of people who are without family and near friends to care for them in case of sickness or accident, and that it is almost impossible to afford them proper accommodations in boarding-houses and crowded tenements, without causing great trouble and inconvenience to all concerned. Under these circumstances it seems strange that the influential, the wealthy, the public-spirited, and benevolent citizens in our midst, who have the best reasons to feel proud of our city in most other respects, have not before this demanded, in the name of justice and humanity, to say nothing of the interests and good name of our city, that a public hospital should be established. It should be borne in mind that all the expense for board, nursing, and

attendance of patients need not necessarily be paid from the city treasury, as there will always be a large number of persons of means who will be glad to avail themselves of the superior advantages afforded in a well conducted hospital.

It is by no means necessary that a very large and expensive structure be erected, or that mere embellishment should be taken into consideration. There is no doubt that a plain and substantial building, containing all necessary accommodations for hospital purposes, of sufficient capacity to meet the present demands of the city, can be provided and furnished for a sum ranging from \$15,000 to \$20,000. Additional buildings may be erected from time to time as they may be needed. A part of the city farm situated near the top of Wilson Hill would afford one of the best locations for an institution of this kind.

It may be said that the "Elliot Hospital," which is to be established at no distant day, will meet all the wants of the people in this regard. To this it may be replied that the will of the late Mrs. Elliot expressly stipulates that none but Protestants can share the benefits of the institution founded by her liberality; so that a large proportion of our people who are equally entitled to the consideration and charity of the public in case of misfortune will be left to shift for themselves, unless the city authorities take some action in this matter.

CITY FARM.

The buildings of the city farm are now in good condition, and well adapted to the convenience and comfort of the worthy poor of the city who are so unfortunate as to

be without homes of their own, and also for the confinement of prisoners sentenced by the police court for drunkenness. The farm consists of about 185 acres of very excellent land in close proximity to the city, and there appears to be no reason why, in ordinary years, the institution should not be self-supporting. The cost to the city for making improvements and sustaining the institution during the past year amounted to the sum of \$12,026.88.

CONCLUSION.

The government of the city is now intrusted to our hands, and the great public interests to which I have referred are placed in our charge and keeping. We are the representatives and servants of the whole people, and have taken a solemn obligation to protect them in their persons and property, and to manage their public affairs with the strictest fidelity, and to the full extent of our ability. For the proper discharge of this important duty all the members of the government are equally responsible, and everyone should at all times exercise the same care and devotion to the public good as if the entire result depended upon his individual efforts. It therefore behooves every one to make a special study of the condition and wants of this municipality, and all measures upon which he will be called upon to act should be thoughtfully examined and considered.

It is hoped that every member of the government will feel that nothing but the most urgent necessity should prevent his prompt attendance upon all of the meetings of the departments and committees to which he belongs,

and thus prevent all delays and embarrassments which would otherwise follow.

Let all our official acts be above board and open to the inspection and criticism of every citizen, and let us resolve to perform our duties with the strictest impartiality, and without discrimination in favor of any class or individual whether they occupy the highest or the lowest position in the social scale.

In our intercourse with one another let us cultivate a spirit of respect and good-will, and let our official relations at all times be characterized by courtesy and mutual forbearance. And now let us consecrate our best faculties and powers to the service of the people and seek for the inspiration of Divine Wisdom to aid and assist in every hour of difficulty and doubt, so that in surrendering the trusts which have been committed to our care we may have the approbation of our own consciences and the satisfaction of knowing that we have done all in our power to perpetuate the fair fame and to promote the prosperity of our city.



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